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ABSTRACT

Women's representation in educational administration positions is inconsistent with the extent of their employment in education (and in management positions elsewhere.) Recent research by F. I. Ortiz reveals two distinct types of career patterns for female educational administrators: the specialist, supervisor, and elementary principalship path and the secondary principalship and superintendency path. The specific position held determines the career pattern the woman administrator will follow; similarly, pre-administrative career activities (teaching, coaching, counseling) influence movement into administrative careers. In this study, a self-response questionnaire was administered to a stratified sample of women administrators in Washington public schools. Career patterns were analyzed for all respondents and for each position category identified. Possible career contingencies were also reviewed and included educational background, district attitudes toward women's employment, marital status and parenting, and career aspirations. Results support Ortiz's career path findings. The K-12 superintendency path involved more advancement at the building administration and central office level. Elementary superintendents' career mobility was more restricted and place-bound. Study results may aid women desiring to enter or advance in educational administration by identifying the proper career sequence. Included are 8 tables or graphs and 25 references. (MEL)

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CAREER PATTERNS OF FEMALE ADMINISTRATORS
IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Paper Presented at the Annual Meeting of
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CAREER PATTERNS OF FEMALE ADMINISTRATORS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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CAREER PATTERNS OF FEMALE ADMINISTRATORS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Background of the Study

The participation of women in educational administration positions continues to be inconsistent with the extent of their employment in the field of education. In the United States women constitute 66 percent of all public school instructional personnel, but women are only 1.8 percent of the nation's local superintendents, 0.9 percent of local assistant/associate superintendents, 23 percent of elementary school principals, and 10 percent of secondary school principals (Office for Multicultural and Equity Education, 1985).

In the past decade, an increased awareness of the role of the employed professional woman has gained attention through legislative mandates, such as Affirmative Action and Title IX. This legislation impacted the employment of women in management and administrative roles in the field of public education. Women are beginning to make employment gains in educational administration positions, but the pace of those gains is relatively slow.

It is important that women who aspire to positions in education administration know the nature of the career paths which are most likely to lead to those positions (Gallant, 1980). The study was conducted to gain information about the career patterns of women serving in education administration in public education.

The purpose of the study can be understood in terms of two related questions. First, what are the career patterns of women in education administration positions? And, second, what are the influences of career contingencies upon the career patterns of administrative women?

The continued absence of women in education administration has been contributed in part to structural characteristics within the institution of public education. Research compiled by Ortiz (1982) viewed organizational factors and personal characteristics as a means of understanding occupational and organizational participation as they relate to career patterns in education. Ortiz identified organizational factors within educational settings as major limiting conditions which exclude females and minorities from attaining administrative positions and/or advancement. Situational factors involved in the structure of the educational organization, coupled with career contingencies of women serving in administrative positions, provide a means for anticipating consequences of career aspirations. The intent of the study was to examine career patterns of administrative women and the influences of career contingencies upon those career patterns.

Review of the Literature

The notion of a career and a career pattern is useful to understand work organizations and the movement and fate of people in them. As Carlson and Schmuck (1981) point out, the word career may refer to one's line of work or occupation, but career is also used to refer to progress through a sequence of positions. Merely holding a job or position does not constitute a

career; Carlson and Schmuck define a career as an "orderly and logical sequence of jobs one holds over a period of time" (p. 117). Whereas men visualize a career as a progression of jobs on a path leading upward with recognition and reward implied, Hennig and Jardim (1976) indicate women see a career as personal growth, self-fulfillment, satisfaction, contributing to others, and doing what one wants to do. The discrepancy in career definition between men and women may account for some of the differences in roles of women and men in education administration.

Career progress or sequence seem to be critical elements in the concept of a career or career pattern. The pathway to the most desirable managerial jobs in the corporate realm is "to hold a variety of positions across functions for two or three years each, including a stint in central headquarters" (Kanter, 1977, p. 130). A career pattern in education administration, therefore, would most likely begin with entrance in the teaching profession and include several years as a vice principal, a principal, a central office position, and lead to the superintendency. The hierarchical structure of a career pattern in school administration typically involves a straight line from teacher to principal to superintendent (Schmuck, 1975). Larger school districts may include additional positions of assistants, directors, supervisors, coordinators, and specialists. Schmuck notes that movement up the hierarchy in larger school districts typically includes passage through one or more of these positions in the attainment of the superintendency.

Much of our knowledge about women in school and business administration is based on the study of women whose careers began

before World War II (Adkison, 1981). Adkison points out that the careers of women who have entered the market more recently may reveal different patterns. A study completed by Paddock (1981) found women administrators generally have career patterns that are similar to their male colleagues, with the exception of later entry to administration and career discontinuities.

The research completed by Ortiz (1982) notes two distinct types of career patterns for women in education administration: the career patterns of women who occupy the specialist, supervisory, and elementary principalships and the career patterns of women who occupy the secondary principals, associate, assistant, and deputy superintendencies and superintendencies. This multi-career pattern concept theorizes that the specific position a woman holds in the educational system will determine the outcome of the type of career pattern the administrative woman will follow.

Pre-administrative career activities influence the movement into administrative careers. Women generally spend more time in teaching than men (Gross and Trask, 1976; Paddock, 1980). Gallant (1980) found that women who had been involved as coaches or co-curricular advisors were more likely to enter administration at a younger age (median 34.5 years) than women who had served as counselors (median age of 42), or as specialists or coordinators (median age of 40).

The study of dimensions which relate to individuals' mobility within career patterns in education administration was the focus of research conducted by Ortiz (1979, 1982). Ortiz

cites three dimensions that correspond to the three types of movement necessary in sustaining an administrative career. The dimensions include hierarchical, circumferential, and radial movement. Movement in the dimensions provides an opportunity to increase vertical rank (hierarchical movement), increase the function or level of responsibility (circumferential movement), and increase the proximity to the closeness to the organizational leaders (radial movement). In addition, the type or character of mobility within career patterns may determine the nature of the career pattern. The individual who waits for an available or desirable position within the same school or district is place-bound (Ortiz, 1979). The individual who actively seeks a position, regardless of the location, is career-bound.

Women's underrepresentation in school administration may be seen as a result of limited opportunities to attain such positions (Stockard, 1980). The decline of representation of women in school administration during the post-World War II era is somewhat understandable in view of the influx of men in the education profession during that period of time (Schmuck, 1980). In the 1960's and 1970's, federal legislative efforts to promote equality of occupational opportunity for women provided momentum for the increase of women employed as managers in all occupations in the United States. Hart (1980) reports the number of women managers employed in all occupations in the United States increased from 1.3 million in 1969 to 2.6 million in 1979 and accounted for one-fourth of all managerial jobs. Women managers in the field of education, however, have not maintained a similar pace. Although women dominate the pool of workers in education,

they are rarely found at the top of the hierarchy (Biklen & Brannigan, 1980). Career contingencies, factors which appear to be important for the hiring of school administrators (Paddock, 1981), can also influence the employment of women in education administration.

There are several theories that attempt to explain the absence of women in education administration. According to Harder and Waldo (1983), men currently hold the balance of power and are reluctant to allow women access to administrative positions. Role expectations for women denote them as less serious candidates for important or powerful positions (Martin, Harrison, & Dinitto, 1983). Of those women who do gain access to positions in education administration, many are in token positions which hinder their ability to effective functioning in an administrative capacity (Ortiz, 1982; Sackville-West, 1983).

Traditionally, fewer females than males have participated in certification, doctoral, or internship programs in administration (Shakeshaft, 1983). Recent studies indicate an increasing number of women are involved in graduate study in education administration, particularly at the doctorate level. At Hofstra University, Shakeshaft, Gilligan, and Pierce (1984) note women made up almost 50 percent of the total enrollment in school administration programs during the 1970's. Shapiro (1984) reports in New York graduate schools of education, women now are the majority of students.

A great deal has been written about the socialization of women to function in the role of wife/mother and to pursue a career. Adkison (1981) cites research that shows many

administrative women are married, and although may experience some overload, they combine family and career without overwhelming stress. In contrast, Marshall writes: "Current mothering and administrator roles are so incompatible that even self-defined women cannot find ways to manipulate, integrate, and find sufficient substitutes" (1981, p. 223). A study conducted by Rometo (1983) in Pennsylvania's public schools shows administrative women are pursuing both a family and a career but women have fewer children in comparison to previous studies in Pennsylvania completed in 1971 and 1976.

Much has been written about the career socialization of women and the assumption that women do not aspire to leadership positions. Harder and Waldo (1983) feel the sex-role stereotyping and socialization theory inadequate to explain the emergence of the increased number of women preparing for management careers. According to the two researchers, "Women themselves were rejecting the idea that they did not possess the skills and characteristics essential for effective management" (pp. 37-38).

The preparation for nontraditional careers is evidence that a large number of women do not conform to sex role stereotypes (Adkison, 1981). In a study described by Edson (1981), women trusted their abilities and qualifications for administration, believed in their own intelligence to overcome the obstacles, and were confident in their ability to do the job. Studies conclude that women have aspirations for high level administration and management positions, but those aspirations may be tempered by the perceived lack of opportunity to move up the hierarchy.

The multiple roles of wife-mother-worker may be a source of

conflict for professional women in education administration as they balance career and family responsibilities.

Research Methods and Procedures

The available literature was reviewed to determine the parameters of the study and the design of the instrumentation to collect data for the study. A self-response questionnaire was administered to a stratified sample of women in education administration in the K - 12 public schools in the state of Washington. Distributions of female administrators and teachers in this state were found to be similar to national percentage distributions.

Previous research had compared career patterns of selected women in education administration with men in education administration (Paddock, 1980; Schmuck, 1980). The current study included only women in order to obtain comprehensive data about the career patterns and career contingencies of administrative women in all levels and positions within a single state area. In selected administrative positions, each female administrator identified was included in the study. Due to the limited number of women employed in the positions, each female superintendent and assistant superintendent was included. All female secondary-level principals and vice principals were requested to respond to the study because of the relatively small numbers in the positions and the importance placed upon these positions in upward career mobility in school administration. A sample of elementary principals and central office staff specialists were selected using a random sampling method.

The questionnaire was constructed to include two major sections. The first section sought information about the employment history of the participants in the study. In the second section, respondents were asked to provide information about career contingencies, including age, marital status, number and ages of children, career aspirations, education preparation, characteristics of school districts in which they were employed, and participation in formal activities associated with their current employment. The design of the study was retrospective rather than longitudinal and reflected current perceptions of the subjects. Responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics for the data collected.

In November, 1984, questionnaires were mailed to 265 female administrators identified as subjects for the sample. The initial mailing and subsequent follow-up mailings yielded 199 returned questionnaires which represents a 75.1 percent return rate for the survey. The information in the following table illustrates the return rate of the selected respondents in the study.

Summary and Analysis of Data

Career patterns were analyzed for all respondents and for each position category identified. The analysis established career patterns for all superintendents; all assistant superintendents; all other central office staff specialists; all high school, junior high school/middle school, and elementary principals; and all high school and junior high school/middle school vice principals.

Career contingencies which may effect the career patterns of

Questionnaires Returned by Women Respondents

Level/Position	Number of Possible Returns	Actual Returns	Percent Returned	Percent of Total Returns
Central Office				
Superintendent	13	9	62.2	4.5
Assistant Superintendent	10	7	70.0	3.5
Other Central Office Staff	35	28	80.0	14.1
High School				
Principal	27	22	81.5	11.1
Vice Principal	52	34	65.4	17.1
Junior High School/ Middle School				
Principal	22	17	77.2	8.5
Vice Principal	54	40	74.1	20.1
Elementary School				
Principal	53	43	82.7	21.6
	265	199	75.1 ^a	100.5 ^b

^a75.1 percent of the questionnaires distributed were returned.

^bTo the nearest one-tenth of a percent.

women were reviewed and included educational background, district attitudes toward the employment of women, marital status and parenting, and career aspirations.

Career patterns of the respondents were examined in context of movement along three dimensions: vertical or hierarchical movement in which rank is increased or decreased; circumferential movement in which function or division of the organization is changed; and radial movement in which centrality in the organization is increased or decreased. Based upon the employment history of the respondents, a typical career pattern was collectively established for each group of individuals who held a specific administrative position.

Hierarchical Movement

Career patterns in education administration generally recognize a hierarchical movement from teacher to principal to superintendent, with with possible passage through one or more of the positions of specialist, assistant, director, coordinator, or supervisor prior to reaching the superintendency. In this analysis, administrative positions are hierarchically arranged and ranked following criteria established by Gairtner (1981). The hierarchical ranking begins with the position of vice principal, and progresses vertically to principal, other central office staff, assistant superintendent, with the position of superintendent at the top of the hierarchical rank. Although the rank of the category "other central office staff" may depend upon the responsibilities of the position, for the purposes of examining the career patterns in the present study, other central

office staff are classified hierarchically above all building level administrators. Two non-administrative positions were hierarchically ranked. The entry-level position of the hierarchy was that of classroom teacher, the lowest position of the hierarchical ranking, followed by building support staff. These two positions were included to allow for the examination of the complete range of positions in the career hierarchy.

In order to develop a position history for each respondent, each position title was classified and coded according to its similarity to positions established in the hierarchical scheme. A numerical value was assigned to each position as follows: superintendent (7); assistant superintendent (6); other central office staff, such as consultants, directors, administrative assistants, or coordinators (5); principal (4); vice principal (3); building support such as building-level specialists, counselors, librarians, administrative assistants, or athletic/activity director (2); and classroom teacher (1).

The typical hierarchical career pattern was coded for each respondent in each of the five administrative categories. The hierarchical career pattern position index was calculated using the numerical values of the position category to arrive at a mean hierarchical score for the current position of the respondents and the previous six positions they have held. As a component of the hierarchical career pattern, the numerical means were plotted on graphs to illustrate the linear progression of the hierarchical career pattern for each position category. The mean age of the women in the administrative position category is calculated for age at initial entry to employment in the K - 12 school

system; age at attainment of the first administrative position; age at attainment of the current administrative position; and current age.

In examining the career patterns for the current position reported by the respondent, the following three procedures are utilized. First, the sequential pattern of the career history is presented. The current positions and six of the previous positions of the respondents are examined to determine the typical sequential career pattern. A graph was developed to illustrate the sequential career pattern of each administrative category. Second, a hierarchical career pattern position index was calculated by using the numerical values of the hierarchical rank of administrative positions to arrive at a mean position index score for the current position and six of the previous positions. A graph is used to illustrate the hierarchical career pattern of each administrative category. Third, a comparison of the hierarchical career pattern of superintendents with each of the administrative categories and subcategories below the hierarchical level of superintendent is examined. A graph is used to compare the hierarchical career pattern of superintendents with the hierarchical career patterns of the other administrative categories. The following three graphs exemplify the manner in which the data were presented in graphic format.

For purposes of analysis of the graphs, one pattern of vertical or horizontal movement is distinguished from another pattern by the frequency in which respondents follow a typical sequence or a typical career pattern.

In examining the position histories and the current

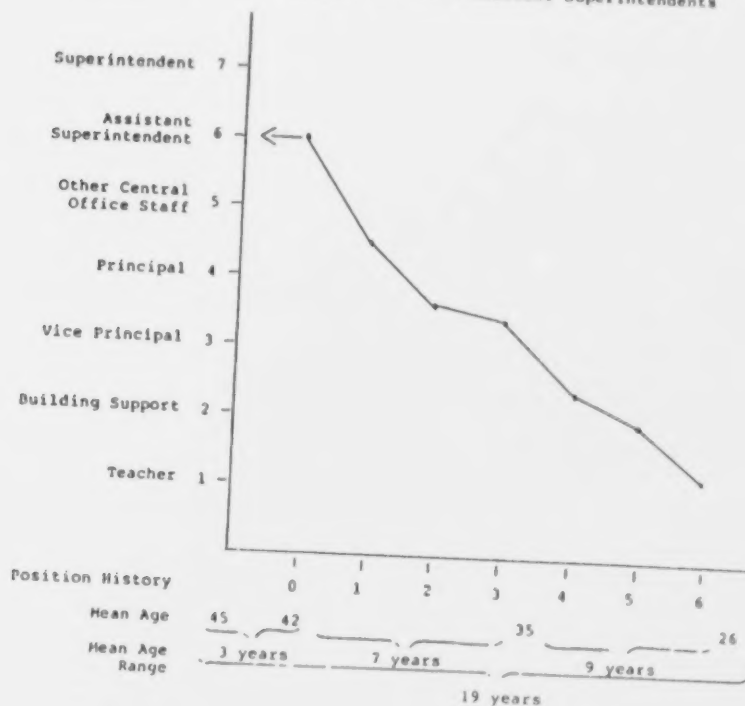
Career Patterns for Women Assistant Superintendents

Position Category	Current Position	Previous Position	Second Previous Position	Third Previous Position	Fourth Previous Position	Fifth Previous Position	Sixth Previous Position
Superintendent	7 ^a						
Assistant Superintendent	6	9 ^b					
Other Central Office Staff	5	5	4	3	1		
Principal	4	2	1	2	2	1	
Vice Principal	3	2		1		1	
Building Support	2		4	1	2	3	1
Classroom Teacher	1			2	4	3	6
Number in Position	9	9	9	9	9	8	7

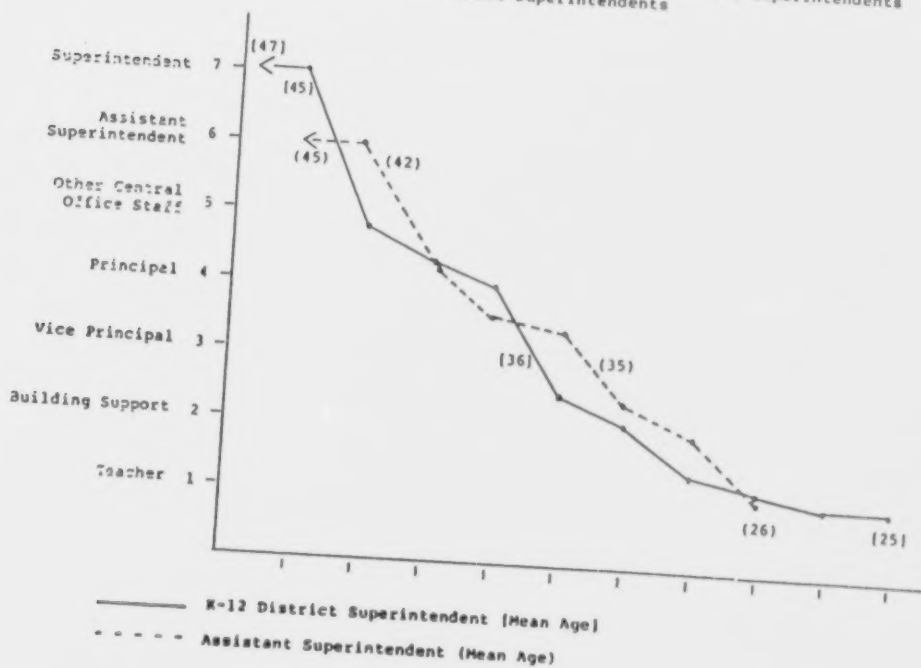
^aHierarchical rank/numerical value for position.

^bNumber of respondents in position.

Hierarchical Career Pattern of Women Assistant Superintendents



Comparison of Hierarchical Career Patterns of Women K-12 District Superintendents and Women Assistant Superintendents



responsibilities of superintendents, two distinct categories emerge. Of the nine respondents, six serve in districts which encompass K - 12 educational programs. Three respondents served in districts which included only elementary grades (K - 8); in addition, these respondents report serving as elementary principal for the district. For purposes of the study, superintendents were subcategorized as K - 12 district superintendents and elementary district superintendents.

The career pattern of women currently employed as superintendents in K - 12 school districts was established as a norm for comparison with career patterns of women employed in other administrative positions as a means of anticipating the consequences of career patterns that may provide for upward career mobility to the superintendency.

The analysis of the data provided by the position history of the respondents indicates two hierarchical career patterns for the administrative women emerge.

The career patterns of women serving in the K - 12 district superintendency, the assistant superintendency, and the secondary principalship share two characteristics. First, the career patterns contain a hierarchical sequence of positions that increase in rank and responsibility. Second, the respondents in the positions have similar average chronological ages, as shown in the following table, at the time they enter employment in the K - 12 educational system and the time they attain their first administrative position.

The career patterns of elementary district superintendents, other central office staff, and elementary principals also share

two characteristics. First, women in these positions have a career pattern that moves vertically from teaching to their current position with less opportunity to gain experience in sequential positions of responsibility. Second, women in these positions are likely to enter employment in the K - 12 school system at a later age and spend a longer period of time between entrance to the K - 12 school system and movement to an administrative position.

Secondary vice principals have limited sequential and hierarchical career patterns; therefore it is difficult to categorize these positions within the two career patterns. The chronological ages of high school vice principals tend to be more similar to the characteristics of the elementary principals and other central office staff than to K - 12 district superintendents, assistant superintendents, or secondary principals.

Circumferential Movement

Career patterns in administration encompass circumferential movement as one's function or division in the organization is changed. Major circumferential movement is made when the individual departs from teaching, which involves children, to administration, which involves managing adults. Movement may be both circumferential and vertical, such as moving from teaching to a principalship. Changes in positions made by individuals help identify career patterns.

From the data obtained from the administrative sample, the average number of career position changes, administrative position changes, and employing school districts was determined for

each administrative category. The combination of the variables of career, administrative, and district changes supports the supposition that the opportunity for circumferential movement is in part determined by the changes in responsibility and position an individual may experience each time she changes her position or employer. Changes in employing school districts are also an indicator if an individual is place-bound or career-bound.

Career positional changes were coded each time an individual noted a change in responsibility or assignment in the employment history section of the questionnaire. Because it is difficult to discern the nature of a position by title only, respondents were awarded a circumferential position change each time their employment history noted a change in responsibility or a move to a different location. It should be noted that some of the position changes may not have increased the individual's status within the organization, rather the position change would maintain the same circumferential relationship. In addition, the average number of years each respondent remained in a position was tabulated. The following table summarizes the circumferential movement by administrative women.

In analyzing the career patterns of the administrative women in relationship to the circumferential movement they have experienced, it is possible to draw some conclusions regarding trends. K - 12 district superintendents demonstrate a career pattern which indicates they are career-bound: movement to where the position is (employment in four districts); changes in responsibility (employment in more than seven positions); and changes in function (employment in at least three non-administrative

Average Chronological Ages of Administrative Women

Level/Position	Current	Attain Current Position	First Administrative Position	First K-12 Position
Central Office				
K-12 District Superintendent	47	45	36	25
Elementary District Superintendent	58	49	47	31
Assistant Superintendent	45	42	35	26
Other Central Office Staff	46	42	38	26
High School				
Principal	43	39	35	24
Vice Principal	46	41	40	27
Junior High School/ Middle School				
Principal	41	38	34	24
Vice Principal	42	38	37	26
Elementary				
Principal	44	39	37	23

Career Movement by Women at the Central Office Level

Current Position	Average Number Career Changes	Average Years Each Position	Average Number Administrative Positions	Average Years Administrative Position	Average Number Employing Districts
Superintendent					
K-12 District	7.2	2.9	4.0	3.3	4.0
Elementary District	4.0	5.9	1.3	10.2	3.0
Assistant Superintendent	7.4	2.6	3.0	3.4	3.7
Other Central Office Staff	5.4	3.4	2.3	4.3	3.0

Career Movement by Women at the Building Administrative Level

Current Position	Average Number Career Changes	Average Years Each Position	Average Number Administrative Positions	Average Years Administrative Position	Average Number Employing Districts
High School					
Principal	5.0	3.5	2.0	4.1	2.6
Vice Principal	4.5	4.2	1.7	3.7	2.1
Junior High School/ Middle School					
Principal	5.5	3.1	2.3	3.0	3.0
Vice Principal	4.6	3.5	1.3	4.0	2.6
Elementary School					
Principal	4.9	4.1	1.7	4.6	2.9

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positions as well as employment in four administrative positions). Assistant superintendents could also be considered career-bound; their circumferential movement is almost identical to K - 12 district superintendents.

Elementary district superintendents, in contrast to other administrators, have a career pattern of limited circumferential movement. Although they demonstrate movement to where the employment is (three employing districts), they demonstrate limited change in responsibility (four positions) and limited change in function (employment in less than three non-administrative positions and just slightly more than one administrative position). In addition, elementary district superintendents remained in each position they held for a much longer period of time compared to other administrators. Other central office staff, although they report more circumferential movement than elementary district superintendents, also demonstrate a somewhat limited career pattern in regard to circumferential movement. Women in these positions indicate place-bound characteristics.

High school and junior high/middle school principals have a career pattern which notes movement to the position, changes in responsibility, and changes in function. Elementary school principals have more limited career patterns in circumferential movement, especially in the area of changes in function. Elementary principals may be place-bound, which is characterized by individuals waiting in the same district or position until the position they want comes along.

Vice principals, especially at the high school level, may be place-bound. High school vice principals have limited movement

to the position, limited change in responsibility, and limited change in function.

Radial Movement

Radial movement is indicated by the opportunity or situation which allows an individual to move to the center of the organization. Responses from two Likert-type items are used to indicate radial movement in the educational organization. The two items were selected because they provide an opportunity for contact with the superintendent and the school board. Attendance at executive session of school board meeting would be by invitation of the superintendent and school board. Attendance at school board meetings, which in the state of Washington are public meetings open to all who wish to attend, would be by the option of the administrator. Mean scores were obtained for participation in the activity. A mean score of 3.0 would mean regularly or routinely attend/participate; a mean score of 2.0 would indicate frequently or usually attend; and a mean score of 1.0 would indicate seldom or rarely attend.

Participation in executive sessions and open meetings of the school board are an integral part of the role of superintendents and are a frequent activity of assistant superintendents. Although other central office staff have limited opportunity to gain centrality through invitation to executive sessions of school board meetings, women in these positions regularly attend open school board meetings.

The career patterns of principals and vice principals provide limited opportunity to gain centrality through invitational

Opportunity to Gain Centrality by
Administrative Women

Current Position	Executive School Board Mean	Open School Board Mean
Central Office Staff		
K-12 District Superintendent	3.0 ^a	3.0
Elementary District Superintendent	3.0	3.0
Assistant Superintendent	2.4	2.9
Other Central Office Staff	1.0	2.3
Building Level Staff:		
High School		
Principal	.7	1.9
Vice Principal	.2	1.2
Junior High School/ Middle School		
Principal	.3	1.7
Vice Principal	.3	1.4
Elementary School		
Principal	.4	1.4

^aOne superintendent noted "frequent" rather than "regular" attendance at executive sessions of school board meetings. Due to the ambiguity of the question, the mean was adjusted to 3.0.

participation in executive sessions of the school board and they infrequently attend open school board meetings. High school principals do have higher mean scores on both activities than do other principals; however infrequent attendance at open school board meetings is an indication women in these administrative positions do not take advantage of the opportunity to gain visibility (GASing--getting the attention of superiors) with the superintendent and the school board.

After examining the hierarchical, circumferential, and radial movement, two career patterns for the respondents evolved. The first career pattern contained similarities to the careers of the K - 12 district superintendents. This career pattern included sequential progression through a number of educational positions of increasing responsibility and rank; similar chronological ages at the time of entrance to teaching and the attainment of the first administrative position; career-bound characteristics associated with changes in job functions and employers; and opportunity to interact with educational leaders. In addition to K - 12 district superintendents, this career pattern was noted for women serving as assistant superintendents and secondary principals.

The second career pattern lacked characteristics which, according to research, would facilitate career mobility. This career pattern was noted for women who served as superintendents in elementary (K - 8) school districts, central office staff specialist, elementary principals, and to some extent, vice principals. Women in these positions were likely to be place-bound as demonstrated by limited experience in hierarchical educational

positions; by longer pre-administrative experience characterized by older chronological age at entrance to their first administrative position; and by limited changes in job function and employing school districts.

Career Contingencies of Administrative Women

Career contingencies, factors which formally or informally influence the direction of careers, were analyzed for their relationship to career patterns. Three contingent factors were examined for the purpose of further defining characteristics of administrative women's career patterns. These contingencies consisted of graduate educational preparation; employing districts' attitudes toward the hiring/employment of women; and career aspirations.

K - 12 district superintendents, assistant superintendents, and secondary principals were more likely to have an earned doctorate or in a doctorate program; to consider their employing district committed to employing/hiring women in administrative positions; and to aspire to a higher level administrative position or a position in a larger school district. Elementary district superintendents, elementary principals, and central office staff specialists, in contrast, were less likely to have earned doctorates or to be enrolled in a doctorate program. These women were likely to indicate they were employed in token positions or must have superior qualifications to male applicants in order to be hired; and were more likely to indicate a preference to remain in their current position than to aspire to a different administrative position.

Summary, Findings, and Recommendations

The study used an employment history for each respondent to develop a schematic design which allowed the opportunity to examine a spectrum of career patterns for administrative positions. The study was enhanced by examining dimensions that reflect hierarchical, circumferential, and radial movement within career patterns. In addition, the relationship of career patterns and career contingencies was examined.

The comprehensive design of the study allowed the opportunity to examine a spectrum of career patterns for five administrative categories. The career pattern characteristics of the subjects at the superintendency level were analyzed and compared for similarity to research models.

From the analysis of the career characteristics of respondents in the position of superintendent, it was determined that two different career patterns existed for superintendents. The career pattern of women superintendents in the K - 12 school district was established as a basis from which to compare the contributions of dimensions and the relationship of career contingencies to the career patterns of women in other administrative positions.

The career pattern of the K - 12 superintendent included a sequential and a hierarchical progression of positions at the building administration and/or central office level culminating with the attainment of the superintendency. Upward career mobility was demonstrated by the rate of chronological movement from teaching to administration, by circumferential movement within and to positions of increasing responsibility in the

educational system, and by employment in several different school districts. K - 12 district superintendents had characteristics representative of career-bound administrators.

In contrast, women superintendents employed in districts serving only elementary students had a different career pattern. Their sequential and hierarchical experience and previous level of responsibility was limited in comparison to the K - 12 district superintendent. In addition to the position of superintendent, they reported serving as elementary principal for the district. Elementary district superintendents entered education administration at an older age, had limited circumferential movement, and indicated characteristics of a place-bound career.

Initially, career patterns were analyzed in terms of hierarchical movement. As the dimensions of circumferential and radial movement were examined, the career patterns became more clearly defined. The presence of characteristics of the dimensions which lead to career mobility were similar for the career patterns for K - 12 district superintendent, the assistant superintendent, and the secondary principal. In comparison, the presence of the characteristics of the dimensions which indicate limited probability of career advancement were evident for the elementary district superintendent, the central office staff specialist, and the elementary principal. Career contingencies which were likely to be influential in career mobility were aligned with the career-bound pattern and noticeably absent from the place-bound pattern.

The results of the study may be useful to women who are

entering or advancing in the field of education administration. The anticipation of the consequences of a career pattern can be used as a counseling tool to assist women to define career goals and the process of realizing goals. An understanding of the consequences of career patterns that lead to the superintendency may assist women in defining a career sequence that would not limit the probability of reaching the upper administrative levels.

The study found two career patterns evident for women in school administration. One career patterns leads to the K - 12 district superintendency; the second career patterns is much less likely to do so. The second career pattern includes women who are elementary district superintendents. It is suggested that additional research compare the career patterns of women and men in the position of elementary district superintendent to determine if the career pattern is a function of the position or a function of the gender of the individual in the position. Although there is extensive research regarding career patterns in education administration, comparative research on the career patterns of women and men in small-district superintendencies is more limited.

The comprehensive nature of the present study provided a framework to examine career patterns of a broad spectrum of administrative positions. The comparative data obtained from a stratified sample within one state is useful in establishing a basis to study career patterns, including the relationship of career contingencies to career patterns, and to anticipate the outcome of career histories. Additional research using the model

and process developed for this study would add to the limited research data obtained through studies of the career patterns of women in education administration.

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